

Preventing stormwater runoff from entering sewers is an enormous and expensive project. Solutions and their expense depend on what percentage of a city's sewers are combined sewers. In some cases, only a small portion of the sewer is combined, while in other cities, a large downtown system receives wastewater and stormwater runoff. The majority of the combined systems for the CSO communities are in the historic district, riverfront area or downtown.

The solutions a city chooses will depend on a variety of factors unique to the individual situation. However, any solution is probably going to be expensive and will disrupt the routines of citizens. To pay for major construction, the city may have to raise large amounts of money through the sale of bonds, loans and grants from government agencies, increases in residential sewer bills and expenditures of general fund money. In some cases, a city may have the added expense of upgrading its wastewater treatment plant. One recommended strategy for communities with small, undersized combined sewer systems that need additional infrastructure improvements is [sewer separation](#).

The 1994 CSO Control Policy contains four key principles to ensure that CSO controls are cost-effective and meet the requirements of the CWA:

- Provide clear levels of control that would be presumed to meet appropriate health and environmental objectives.
- Provide sufficient flexibility to municipalities, especially those that are financially disadvantaged, to consider the site-specific nature of CSOs and to determine the most cost-effective means of reducing pollutants and meeting CWA objectives and requirements.
- Allow a phased approach for implementation of CSO controls considering a community's financial capability.
- Review and revise, as appropriate, water quality standards and their implementation procedures when developing long-term CSO control plans to reflect the site-specific wet weather impacts of CSOs.

Currently, municipalities with CSOs are developing CSO long-term control plans to help coordinate planning and work toward eliminating wet weather discharges and, more importantly, to meet appropriate health and environmental objectives and requirements. The overall long-term planning approach consists of three major steps: system characterization, development and evaluation of alternatives, and selection and implementation of the controls. As a final step, permittees will be required to partake in post-compliance monitoring to adequately verify compliance with water-quality-based CWA requirements and establish the effectiveness of CSO controls.